



# Life skills for PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCE

**Sector Investment Programme  
(European Commission)**

**TRAINING MODULE FOR TEACHERS**  
Mental Health Centre, Thiruvananthapuram

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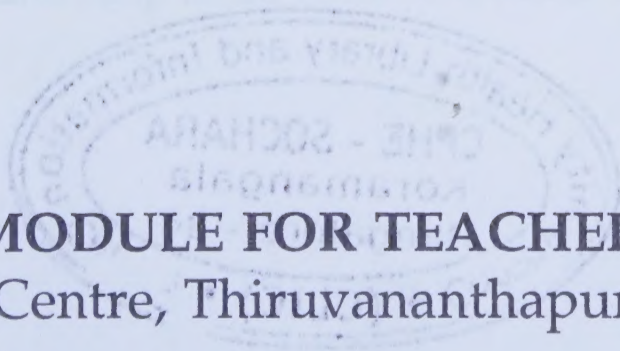
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# **LIFE SKILLS FOR Psychosocial Competence**

**Sector Investment Programme  
(European Commission)**

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Mental Health Centre, Thiruvananthapuram



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# **LIFE SKILLS FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCE**

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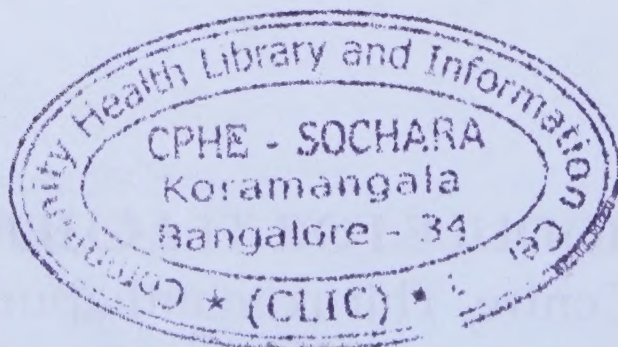
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## **PREFACE**

In kerala the alaming increase in rates of suicide, the increasing percapita intake of alcohol, increase in the incidence of domestic and social violence and the number of cases in family court and divorces are indices of inadequate mental health and psychosocial competence. The efforts to promote psychosocial competence should start from childhood and adolescents.

The sector investment programme funded by the European commission has selected promotion of life skills for building up psychosocial competence among school children as one of its prime concern. This project is designed with a programme to train the teachers to acquire knowledge in this area, to impart mental health awareness to students and to improve mental health services to children and adolescents. This module is prepared for teachers to help them to impart psychosocial skills to students.

The authors have made efforts to produce this training module incorporating the scientific techniques for promoting Psychosocial competence of school children for improvising their life skills. We hope this module will help the teachers to bring up the students empowered with adequate life skills and help them to have a better quality of life.

Thiruvananthapuram  
12.03.2007

Authors

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# LIFE SKILLS FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCE

## INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial competence is a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behaviour while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment.

Psychosocial competence has an important role to play in the promotion of health in its broadest sense; in terms of physical, mental and social wellbeing. Very often health problems are related to behaviour. Where the behaviour is related to an inability to deal effectively with stresses and pressures in life, the enhancement of psychosocial competence could make an important contribution. This is especially important for health promotion at a time when behaviour is more and more implicated as the source of health problems.

The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those which enhance the persons coping resources and personal and social competencies. In school-based programmes for children and adolescents, this can be done by the teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment.

### Defining Life Skills.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable us to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The skills that can be said to be

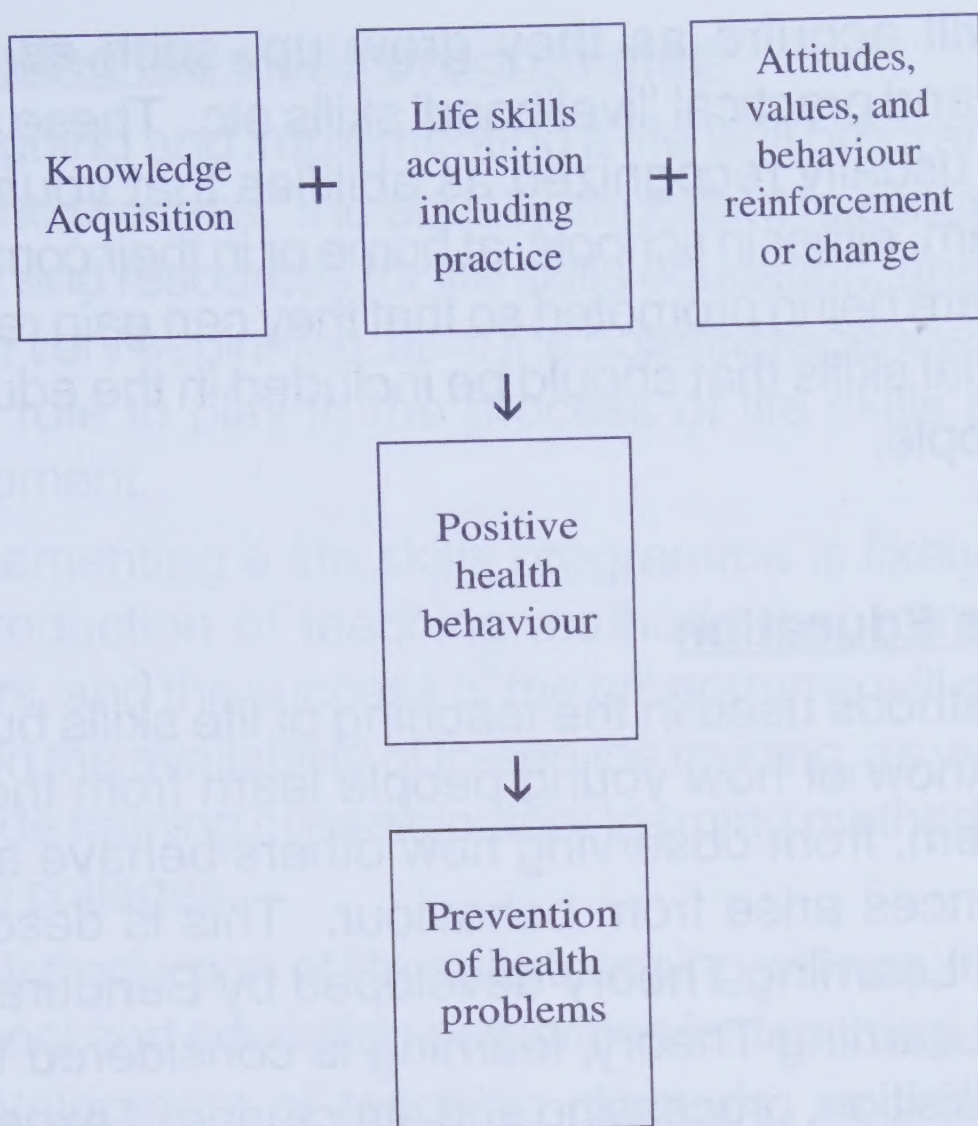
life skills are innumerable. But there is a core set of skills that are the heart of skills based initiatives for the promotion of the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents. They are listed below:

- ⊗ Decision making
- ⊗ Problem solving
- ⊗ Creative thinking
- ⊗ Critical thinking
- ⊗ Communication skills
- ⊗ Interpersonal relationship skills
- ⊗ Self-awareness
- ⊗ Empathy
- ⊗ Coping with emotions
- ⊗ Coping with stress

From the above, complementary life skills can be paired to reveal 5 main life skills 'areas', as shown below. For health promotion, teaching skills in each of these areas provides a foundation for imparting life skills for psychosocial competence.

Decision making Problem solving	Creativethinking Critical thinking	Effective communication Interpersonal relationships
Self-awareness Empathy		Coping with emotions Coping with stresses

The model below shows the place of life skills as a link between motivating factors of knowledge, attitudes and values, and positive health behaviour; and in this way contributing to the primary prevention of health problems.



In promoting the teaching of life skills, the WHO is promoting the teaching abilities that are often taken for granted. However there is growing recognition that with changes in many cultures and lifestyles, many young people are not sufficiently equipped with life skills to help them deal with the increased demands and stresses they experience. It seems that they lack the support required to acquire and reinforce life skills. It may be that traditional mechanisms for passing on life skills (eg. Family and cultural factors) are no longer adequate. Young people's development is influenced by media, changing situations, cultural and ethnic diversity, effect of social change etc. Hence the lives of young people, their expectations, values, and opportunities, are different from that of their parents.

Life skills for psychosocial competence need to be distinguished from other important skills that we hope young

people will acquire as they grow up, such as numeric, technical and practical 'livelihood' skills etc. These and other skills are usually recognized as abilities that young people should learn, either in schools, at home or in their communities. Life skills are being promoted so that they can gain recognition as essential skills that should be included in the education of young people.

### **Life Skills Education**

The methods used in the teaching of life skills build upon what we know of how young people learn from the people around them, from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from behaviour. This is described in the Social Learning Theory developed by Bandura (1977). In Social Learning Theory, learning is considered to be an active acquisition, processing and structuring of experiences.

In life skills education, children are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. The methods used to facilitate this active involvement include working in small group and pairs, brainstorming, role play, games and debates. A life skills lesson may start with a teacher exploring with the students what their ideas or knowledge is about a particular life situation in which a life skill can be used. The children may be asked to discuss the issues raised in more detail in small groups or with a partner. They may then engage in short role play scenarios, or take part in activities that allow them to practice the skills in different situations. Actual practice of skills is a vital component of life skills education. Finally, the teacher will assign homework to encourage the children to further discuss and practice the skills with their families and friends.

## **Developing life skills programmes**

Designing and implementing a life skill programme is only part of the process. It is equally important to secure long term support and resources for life skills education, and to engage, from the very beginning, all of the potential agencies that would have a role to play in the process of life skills programme development.

Implementing a life skills programme is likely to enquire the introduction of teaching methods that may be new to teachers, and the success of the programme will depend very much on the availability of in-service training, as well as efforts to include training in participatory learning methods in teacher training colleges.

The introduction of life skills teaching will require input from the school and education authorities for teaching, training and the development of teaching manuals, as well as for the ongoing support of teaching programmes once they are in place. This investment is worthwhile considering that the potential gains of life skills teaching are so far reaching. Apart from the impact on child health, there may be other benefits for the school as an institution. For example, evaluative studies of life skills programmes suggest that the methods used can help to improve teacher and pupil relationships (Parsons et al 1988), and there are indications that life skills lessons are associated with fewer reports of classrooms behaviour problems. There are also research indications of improved academic performance as a result of teaching programmes that include the teaching of life skills (Weissberg et al. 1989). Other positive effects include improved school attendance (Zabin et al., 1986), less bullying, fewer referrals

to specialist support services and better relationships between children and their parents.

A life skills programme will have to be proven worthy of the resources allocated to it. Process and outcome evaluation studies should be carried out and results shared with all the relevant decision makers that could effect the future of the programme. A programme that has a component of ongoing assessment of its use and impact offers scope for keeping in touch with changing priorities, and is more likely to be modified and maintained over time.

Well-designed, tested and delivered life skills programmes can achieve much in helping children and adolescents to become more responsible, healthy and resilient both now and as adults.

## **FORMULATING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

Objectives for life skills education should be based on a needs assessment.

The needs assessment will help to identify the most relevant prevention and promotion objectives for life skills education for children and adolescents. As far as possible the needs assessment should make use of existing reports and statistics. Existing statistics describing the prevalence of particular problems can help to put force behind new initiatives which are designed to have implications for the prevention of those problems.

In relation to life skills education relevant statistics include the incidence of health and social problems that are related to mental wellbeing and behaviour. These include;

- ⊗ Extent and type of substance use and abuse.
- ⊗ HIV/AIDS prevalence
- ⊗ Teenage suicide rates
- ⊗ Incidence of childhood psychiatric disorder and psychological problems.
- ⊗ Extent of violence in schools.
- ⊗ Pregnancy rates in school children

The formulation of objectives of a life skills programme should also include a review of education and / or health policy, and where possible the life skills development group should try to pursue the development of life skills education within existing government policy and priorities. Where existing policy is absent or inadequate, the life skills development group working with or through the advisory panel, will need to present the case for necessary policy changes.

Two questions that need to be addressed early on are, what life skills are to be taught, and for which groups and ages?

**i) What skills to teach?**

For a broad based foundation in life skills the following were suggested as complementary life skills for the enhancement of psychosocial competence:

Decision making Problem solving	Creative thinking Critical thinking	Effective communication Interpersonal relationships
Self-awareness Empathy	Coping with emotions Coping with stresses	

The life skills development group will need to determine which life skills areas are most relevant if it is not possible to cover all of these. They will need to determine the exact nature of the skills to be taught, and to determine the specific applications of life skills that will be taught to address primary prevention objectives.

## **ii) What is the target group of the life skills programme?**

If a life skills programme is to be developed for the promotion of health and well-being, it should ideally be targeted at all children and adolescents as a positive response to health needs, rather than as an intervention aimed only at those already at risk or who already have health problem.

Life skills programmes can be developed for all ages of children and adolescents in school, and experience gained in countries where life skills programmes have been developed suggests 6-16 years as an important age range for life skills learning. However, the age groups to be targeted are likely to be determined by education policy and the resources available, as well as by the age at which children are most likely to be in school. It will be necessary to weigh up the value of life skills education to different age groups. Given the role of life skills in the promotion of positive health behaviour, it is worthwhile ensuring that life skills programmes are available in the pre-adolescent or early adolescent years, since young people of this age group seem to be most vulnerable to behaviour related health problems.

## **Designing life skills lessons**

The acquisition of skills is based on learning through active participation. Life skills lessons will therefore need to be

designed to allow opportunities for practice of skills in a supportive learning environment.

Life skills lessons are both active and experiential. In passive learning, the teacher passes on knowledge and the learner is the recipient of information (as in didactic teaching). Active learning however, engages the teacher and pupil in a dynamic process of learning by using methods such as brainstorming, group discussion, debates, game and role play. Life skills lessons use such active methods and should also include homework assignments that encourage pupils to extend their analysis and practice of life skills to their lives at home and in their communities. Traditional games, often used in life skills lessons, offer one good example of how life skills are learned through doing, and are taught using activities that can be continued outside the classroom. For example, games like being led blindfold around a room are used to teach trust, and whispering games, where a message is whispered from person to person, are used to teach listening skills.

Two methods that are frequently used in life skills lessons are **brainstorming and role play**.

## Brainstorming

This is a creative technique for generating ideas and suggestions on a particular subject. Any topic can be explored using brainstorming. A question may be asked or an issue may be raised, and every one in the group is asked to give suggestions about it in very simple terms, ideally with one word or a short phrase. In brainstorming, people just call out what they think there should be no need to go round the group one by one. All suggestions would be listed for the

whole group to see. Brainstorming gives an opportunity for everyone's ideas to be valued and accepted without criticism. Brainstorming can be a good technique for the teacher to learn from the children how much they understand about a subject and to see how they describe it in their own terms. It is also a very effective way of hearing the ideas from the whole group in a limited period of time. Later in the lesson, the various brainstorm ideas can be assessed in relation to the concepts being taught.

## **Role play**

This is the acting out of a scenario, either based on text or based on example situations described by the teacher or students. In role play, various aspects of the same situation can be tried out, and the students involved can be given a chance to try out the life skills they are being taught. Role play is perhaps the most important method in life skills teaching, since the students involved can experience for themselves the use of new skills in different situations. Role play can be of considerable value for dealing with sensitive issues that may cause anxiety in real encounters. The learner can observe and practice ways of behaving in a safe, controlled environment before facing real situations.

# **PART I**

## **Life Skills - Definitions**

### **1. Decision Making**

Decision making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about life. This can have consequences for health if young people actively make decisions about their actions. During this process they will assess the different options and what effects different decisions have.

### **2. Problem Solving**

Problem solving enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strains.

### **3. Creative Thinking**

Creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situations of our daily lives with innovative ideas. Creative thinking process contributes a great deal in economizing the utilization of resources. Indirectly creative thinking facilitates all other life skills. Creative thinking is the ability of person to look at the same situation with different mind sets and produce as many creative responses as possible.

### **4. Critical Thinking**

Critical Thinking is an ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize & assess the factors that influence attitudes such as values, peer pressure & the media.

### **5. Effective communication**

Effective communication means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally & nonverbally in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions desires, needs & fears. It also means being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.

### **6. Interpersonal Relationship skills**

Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate positively with the people we interact with.

## **7. Self-Awareness**

Self awareness is recognition of our self, of our character, of our strengths and weaknesses, of our desires and dislikes. This can bring out the best in our personality, by enhancing self-esteem.

## **8. Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to understand and accept others who are different from us -to put oneself in the other person's shoes. This can encourage a positive behavior towards people in need of care and assistance, not to laugh at others in need. To inculcate tolerance and sympathy for people with disabilities or those who may be stigmatized or ostracized by society.

## **9. Coping with Emotions**

Coping with emotions involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others. One should be aware of how emotions influence behaviors. One should be able to respond to emotion appropriately. Intense emotions like anger, sorrow or tension can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

## **10. Coping with Stress**

Coping with stress is about recognising the sources of stress in our lives. Recognize how stress affects us. Find out ways that help us to control our levels of stress. It means learning how to ease the tensions created by unavoidable stresses so that it will not give rise to health problems.

## PART II

### Designing a life skills education programme

The following model describes three basic levels of life skills lessons, which can be taught in sequence, in order to create a life skills education programme.

Level 1 Teaching of basic components of core life skills, practiced in relation to common everyday situations.

Level 2 Application of life skills to relevant themes that are connected to various health and social problems.

Level 3 Application of skills in relation to specific situations that can give rise to health and social problems and needs that are targeted for promotion or prevention.

An example outline of a life skills education programme based on titles of life skills lessons covering these three levels is illustrated below. The model is fictional, and is only intended to illustrate how a life skills programme might be put together to cover a broad based foundation in life skills. This can be built on so that students have the opportunity to practice the skills relevant to major health issues.

## **1. Decision Making**

### **Levels**

1. Learning basic steps for decision making
2. Making difficult decision
3. Decision making about important life plan

## **2. Problem Solving**

### **Levels**

1. Basic steps for problem solving
2. Generating solutions to difficult problem / dilemmas
3. Conflict resolution

## **3. Creative Thinking**

### **Levels**

1. Develop capacities to think in a creative way.
2. Generating new ideas about things that are taken for granted.
3. Adapt to changing social circumstances.

## **4. Critical Thinking**

### **Levels**

1. Learning the basic process in critical thinking
2. Make objective judgments about choice & risks eg. TV Viewing
3. Resisting media influence on attitudes towards smoking & alcohol

## **5. Effective communication**

### **Levels**

1. Verbal and non verbal communication skills are imparted.
2. Assertive communication in the face of peer pressure
3. Use assertiveness to resist pressure to do potentially health damaging activities.

## **6. Interpersonal Relationship skills**

### **Levels**

1. Learning to value relationships with friends & family
2. Forming new relationships & surviving loss of friendships
3. Seek support & guidance from others in time of need.

## **7. Self-Awareness**

### **Levels**

1. Learn about oneself as a special person. (This should emphasise on building positive outlook about self and self-esteem)
2. Self control
3. My rights and responsibilities

## **8. Empathy**

### **Levels**

1. Understanding how people are alike and how we differ, and learning to appreciate the differences between people.
2. Avoid prejudice and discrimination of elderly people, people who differ.
3. Caring of people who are handicapped, mentally ill, ostracized.

## **9. Coping with Emotions**

### **Levels**

1. Recognition of the expression of different emotions
2. Understanding how emotions affect the way we behave
3. Coping with emotional distress.

## **10. Coping with Stress**

### **Levels**

1. Identifying sources of stress
2. Methods of coping in stressful situation
3. Cop up with situations of adversity.

## **PART III**

### **LIFE SKILL LESSONS**

#### **Teaching Methodology**

##### **1. DECISION MAKING**

The students are asked to examine the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of decision making such as – by impulse, by putting off, by not deciding, by letting others make decisions for us, by evaluating all choices and then deciding.

The facilitator then tells the group that the evaluation of different aspects of situation is the best process to use when making an important decision. The following model for decision making is presented.

Step 1 Name the choices and alternatives involved in your decision

Step 2 Gather information about the decision (considering values, goals and list the facts you need to know).

Step 3 List the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.

Step 4 Make your decision and list your reasons for this choice.

The students go through the model for eg. Decision making in dilemma situations, first together and then in small groups. Then the students compare how the different groups handled the same dilemma. The teacher asks if anyone wants to share a real dilemma that the group could try to look at using the decision making steps.

The following questions are asked.

1. Has anyone in the group ever made a decision that didn't turn out well? Has the decision making model ever helped? How? Which step?
2. How do you know you have considered all the facts you needed to make a decision? Who could you talk to regarding?
3. Do you think you could really use this model?

## 2. PROBLEM SOLVING

- ◆ A short role play is used to show an **argument**.
- ◆ The students are asked to define what the problem is, without becoming judgmental.
- ◆ The group is asked to consider what effects they get while defining a problem.
- ◆ The group is asked to write a short role play, showing an argument developing and taking place, followed by a definition of the problem.

- ◆ Problems that the students experience are introduced as examples of problems for the class to work on together.
- ◆ A **quarrel** is illustrated using role play.
- ◆ The group then considers each person in the role play in turn and they write down the feelings each person may have without being judgmental.
- ◆ The students brainstorm to show how many possible courses of action could be taken to solve the problem.
- ◆ The group looks at the list of feelings generated.
- ◆ Once something has been suggested for each feeling and for each person in the problem scenario, the list of options is compared to the original problem situation
- ◆ The group put forward suggestions for an appropriate solution.
- ◆ A plan is drawn up, composed of small steps that each person involved in the argument could take to bring about a solution.

### 3. CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking involves divergent thinking and originality. Creative thinking process contributes a great deal in economizing the utilization of resources. It helps a person to respond optimal to the demand of situation; thus saving a lot of emotions and human resources. Indirectly creative thinking facilitates all other life skills. Creative thinking is the ability of person to look at the same situation with different mind sets and produce as many creative responses as possible.

- Step 1    Developing capacities to think in creative ways.
- Step 2    Generating new ideas about things that are taken for granted.
- Step 3    Adapting to changing social circumstances.

Spend some time considering the lives of great people like. Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln and Swami Vivekananda. Their vision and mission is the product of their creative thinking

## **Assignments**

Some situations are given below. Discuss each situation and decide together the best method of handling the situations. What all new possibilities did you realise from the discussions? Any new qualities for your improvement have to be adopted?

1. Give the following situation. This is summer vacation; you have a heap of used note books which cannot be put into academic purposes. How will you handle that?
2. You appeared for a scholarship examination and you got selected. You got cash award of Rs. 2000/-. What are all possible ways by which you may spend the money?
3. It is nuisance to you to see that your parents are always in fight. What are your entire route maps for you peaceful living?
4. There are so many unused and dysfunctional equipments (electronics and mechanical) in this school premises. You are given the freedom to manage it. What are all possible ideas?
5. Think that you are living in a new planet. Design the new living system.

6. You are given all the powers to improve your city / Panchayat. Think of the possible priorities for improvement and rules you will enact for the purpose.

Study the episode carefully and answer the questions given below.

One day when the teachers responsible for the class were on leave, the class teacher decided to test the children how they engaged themselves in the free hours in creative activities without disrupting the discipline of the school. If you were the reporter, please prepare a write up on the creative activities on which children might have worked.

1. What did the students do?
2. What all did you observe that day in free periods?
3. Do you think that students can be creative if freedom is given with proper guidance?
4. Is creativity hereditary?
5. Has formal education anything to do with creativity ?

## 4. CRITICAL THINKING

The facilitator gives examples which contrast critical and uncritical thinking, and introduces the steps of critical thinking as below.

- a. Choose a situation to examine
- b. Ask questions to yourself about the situation.
- c. Gather information from other sources to get answers to your questions.

- d. Review the information.
- e. Determine how you will react.

The teacher gives examples to go through the critical thinking steps.

Then the students work in pairs through a work sheet on which the students have to show their use of the critical thinking steps.

The teacher asks the students to consider why it is so important to understand and use critical thinking in day to day life and to think about areas in their lives where these skills can be applied.

The worksheet with examples of situation in which the students can practice applying the critical thinking steps is given as a homework assignment.

The students are asked to write one past experience you could have performed better if you could have applied critical thinking about a situation what they could have done something differently if they had only asked a few critical questions not used critical thinking abilities beforehand.

## **Assignments**

1. You happened to watch a T V advertisement about a leading branded cigarette which depicts vividly a pair with a bottom line which is captivating and stimulating the adolescent boys and girls. The students are asked to prepare a critical evaluation report regarding the episode.
2. A girl has just entered into her 10<sup>th</sup> standard. Her parents wanted to make her a doctor. They decided to send her to a far off town and to put her in a hostel for entrance

- preparation. Give your critical evaluation on such a situation.
3. A senior boy / girl with an outstanding character in your close neighborhood, invites you to watch a video programme to his / her house when nobody was there. Critically evaluate the situation and report.
  4. You are going to a shop to purchase a laptop computer with a specific model of a particular company. The model was not available in the shop. The seller wanted you to purchase another model. Critically evaluate that situation.

## 5. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As an introduction, the students engage in an activity in which one student whispers a message to another and this is then whispered from person to person until it has gone around the whole class. At the end, the students compared the final message to the original to see whether it has changed. If so how far.

Students are asked to define communication and under what conditions effective communication is said to have taken place.

The facilitator tells the students that communication can be verbal and non verbal. Students are asked to say what they think is meant by verbal and non verbal communication. The facilitator is ready with definition to help the students if they cannot think of any.

The facilitator suggests that effective communication is when verbal and non verbal communications are complementary. Difficulties arise when words contradict body

languages. The facilitator asks the students for examples of this, and may provide some help.

Effective communication involves both expressive communication and receptive communication. The Expressive communication is one from the part of the sender, where in he is putting across the message without distortion. When the recipient receives the message in the same meaning as the sender aims Receptive communication occurs.

## **Assignments**

1. Three students are given cards with the words 'angry', 'nervous' and 'content' written on them. Each student uses non-verbal behaviour to communicate the emotion on the card. The rest of the class takes turns to guess the emotion that is being expressed.
2. Students are asked to give examples of a misunderstanding in communication that they have experienced. They are also asked to think about how it might have been avoided. A role play is made up to illustrate one or more of the situations given as examples by the students. The groups are asked how the misunderstanding could have been avoided, and the suggestions are incorporated in a new role play of the situation.
3. To illustrate the value of asking questions to clarify what is being said, the teacher uses the following activity: One student is asked to describe a figure containing different complex geometric shapes by action without aids to the rest of the class. Others are asked to draw the figures in the paper given to them without asking questions. Two other students are then asked to show

the pictures drawn by them and to describe. The original student who has drawn the picture by actions describes the figure again, this time the others can ask questions. Two of the students show their drawings and these are compared to the original to see if this time it was easier to understand what was being described.

4. A role play is enacted. Two friends are involved in a conversation. One of the friends secured A plus Grade in all subjects and the other one is appreciating and congratulating his friend on his achievement. During the first session a screen is put between them. Hence they cannot see each other but the communication can only be heard. In the second session the screen is removed. Hence both of them get visual and auditory feed back. During these two sessions being enacted, others are asked to rate the effectiveness with reasons.
5. A student is asked to readout one paragraph from a text book, included in his curriculum. Then he is asked to teach the students the same paragraph with adequate explanations and illustrations. The same assignment is given to one more student. The rest of the students are asked to evaluate the four above said exercises. Then the class is expected to discuss over it.

## 6. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The facilitator explains that when something is important to us, we say we value it. He/She asks the students to think of something that they said they valued yet did not take care of. The facilitator then explains that we sometimes do the same in our relationships with family and friends.

Students are asked.

- ✕ What do you do to show that you value a friendship or a family relationship?
- ✕ What makes you feel that someone does not value your relationship with him or her?

## **Assignments**

1. Students are divided into groups of three or four and they are asked to consider different scenarios that illustrate a bothersome quality that someone has. Students are asked to think about the scenarios using several questions:
  - a. What are the positive qualities of the person?
  - b. What quality is causing the conflict?
  - c. Is this necessarily a bad quality? When might it be a useful quality?
  - d. If you were in his situation, how would you handle this problem in a positive way?
  - e. Why do you think this quality bothers you so much?
2. In the class room one of the students is blind folded. He is asked to walk from one point to another without any support. Subsequently he is given the support of a friend who holds his hand and he is asked to walk the same distance. Then, he is instructed to explain his experience while walking alone and with the company of a friend. The entire class is also asked to give a report on what they have observed.

3. Each group presents their experiences to the class, and describes what they would do to resolve the relationship problem.
4. As a homework assignment, students are asked to describe ways in which they show that they care and value their family and friends. For up to four people, they are to write about one additional thing they could do to further demonstrate their appreciation for that person.

## 7. SELF AWARENESS

The facilitator asks the students to write their names on a large sheet and to say what does it mean and how do they feel about their names.

In pairs, the students discuss their characteristics eg. Physical characteristics, skills, achievements and also things they would like to be able to do.

Students are asked to write their name in bold letter into a circle drawn on a large sheet of paper. In other circles drawn around this central circle, the headings include: my special things, my special people, what I can do, my favorite foods, etc.

The children are then asked whether they enjoyed the activity, and what they have learnt about themselves. They are asked to finish the statement: 'something I discovered about myself which makes me feel good is.....'

As an activity to do at home, the children are asked to complete the statement 'I am glad that I am **me**, because.....', and they are to ask family members to contribute three positive comments for inclusion.

## **Assignments**

1. In a class, three boys proposed three girls of the same class. Gradually their friendship has grown into love relationship. The three pairs started meeting frequently and telephoning many times a day. Subsequently the family members of the three girls came to know about this. The family strongly warned the girls not to have any kind of relationship with boys. Due to this the girls decided to brake off the relationships. The first boy felt terribly hurt but could not keep away himself from the girl. He continued to make phone calls and visit his girl's place despite the strong protest from the family and girl. The second boy felt that he is cheated by the girl and wanted to do revenge on her. The third boy felt he is inferior and hence rejected by the girl. He started ruminating to end of his life as there is no meaning in living. The three boys are approaching you for peer counseling. What sort of discussions you would have with these friends to make them aware of what is happening to them.
2. In a school hostel a boy used to get the company of two girls for the breakfast. In one morning, the girls went to the coffee house without inviting the boy. The boy felt terribly upset and did not attend that day's class. He was yelling with other boys and getting annoyed on trivial reasons. That same evening, the boy while going for shopping, he saw the other girl who walked off without caring for him. This added more fuel to the fire. He approached to you for peer counseling, describe how you will go about in making him aware about himself.

## 8. EMPATHY

Understanding how people are alike and how we differ, and learning to appreciate the differences between people

Avoid prejudice and discrimination of people who differ.

Care of people with terminal illnesses.

### Assignments

1. Put you in the position of a handicapped student (eg. Close your eyes and walk around the class room).
2. Ask a student to watch an interesting TV programme in a mute mode and discuss his/her reactions.
3. Discuss sign language & lip reading
4. Discuss Nicknames, personal remarks.

Students with nicknames should be asked to express their feelings.

5. Collect pictures from magazines on families where one or more members have been killed by terrorists/in a war/communal violence/accident.

Discuss its effects on the grief stricken family.

6. You see a beggar sitting in front of the railway station. Many vehicles pass by, everyone is in a hurry. The beggar looks very weak and tired. He has probably not eaten for a day or two. He looks upon everybody for help. Imagine yourself to be in his position.

Discuss with other members of the group.

## 9. COPING WITH EMOTIONS

- ◆ To start, the facilitator asks the group to brainstorm the variety of feelings they know of. These are listed and the group discusses the list and classifies the different feelings, (eg. as mild or strong, positive or negative etc.)
- ◆ The group writes down which of the feelings they have experienced and a different list for those they have not.
- ◆ Students look at drawings of facial expressions and they are asked to think about what feelings are being expressed. They then compare their reactions with other children in small groups.
- ◆ The students look at different pictures, eg. of a girl waving goodbye as a bus leaves, and imagine a story that describes the picture, and the feelings of the people involved.
- ◆ Students watch a short film (or hear a short story) and then discuss the mood and atmosphere that is created in it, the feelings portrayed by the characters, and the effects these feelings can have on others.
- ◆ Students are asked to mime a feeling and let others guess what it is. They then role play a situation to see how feelings may affect how we behave.

## 10. COPING WITH STRESS

- ◆ A situation is role played in front of the students who are asked to look for verbal and non-verbal cues of stress.
- ◆ A bully is trying to get another student to smoke. The student doesn't want to, but does not know how to deal with the situation. He reacts by stuttering, fiddling with his clothes and avoids looking at the bully.

The role play then changes. When the young boy is being interviewed about the situation to tell the group about the other cues of stress that were not apparent to the group he says, he was sweating a little, his stomach hurt, his heart was pounding and he was breathing faster than normal. In the role play he is then reassured that lots of people feel that way when they are in a difficult situation.

- ◆ The students are asked to think about a stressful situation they were in and which they would like to cope with better if that situation came up again. They are asked to imagine the situation with their eyes closed, and to remain calm. Then they are to think of a time when they did well in that kind of situation and how good they felt to have coped. They are asked to think how they might improve on the way they handle the situation in future and rehearse this in their mind, before slowly opening their eyes.

- ◆ Students are then introduced to the value of saying positive things to themselves during a stressful situation. Students are told to prepare for a situation by saying to themselves that they can do it. They are encouraged to cope by talking themselves through a situation by giving calm and positive instructions, focusing on what is going well, and to praise themselves after the situation for the things they did well, however big or small.

## **PART IV**

### **OTHER RELEVANT SKILLS**

For psychosocial competence building in addition to core set of life skills discussed in the previous sessions the following areas are also to be considered.

- 1. Academic Achievements**
- 2. Character Education**
- 3. Social Service – learning**
- 4. Drug Prevention**

Academic achievement is one of the most important objectives of formal education. The students, teachers and parents should collaborate in reaching the goal of excellence.

The character education will provide them opportunities to buildup positive traits. This process has already been taken up by most of the teaching institutions. Promoting moral values, developing patriotism and good citizenship are the serious concerns of the teachers and the head of the institutions. In addition to the lessons from the teachers, the students get additional input from the environment, good friends, social leaders, the religious institutions, media and books.

Students should start learning the need of involving in the social service activities right from the early schooling days. They should be aware that there are a lot of less fortunate and weaker sections of people in the country and in the community in which they live. Knowledge should be imparted to the students regarding the nobility of rendering social service to the weaker sections and the needy people. At the same time the student will be taught that one cannot solve all the problems of the society but even a small gesture of social service without much financial commitment has got its own value.

Drug abuse is one of the most important social menaces. Behind every social evil like homicide, suicide, theft, child abuse, women abuse, domestic violence and social violence etc., there is some one who is addicted to some drugs. Alcohol abuse is the most important single cause for the increasing number of road traffic accident in our country. Some substances such as tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, heroin and few psychotropic drugs are habit forming. Adolescence is the age in which students involve in experimentation and engage in risk taking behaviour. The students will get peer pressure to get involved in drug abuse.

In order to deal with peer pressure our students need effective training.

## RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Specific learning objectives: at the end of this subsection the students should be able to

1. Learn concrete ways of dealing with peer pressure and the skills needed in practicing them.

### Materials required:

Blackboard and chalk, to note down the responses of the students.

### Method:

- ⊗ Ask some students to volunteer for the role play.
- ⊗ Explain the scenario of the role-play to them.

Scenario: X has been finally admitted to a gang, which he/she has wanted to since a long time. As days pass X begins to disagree with some of the practices of the gang like cutting classes when the session is not interesting or smoking cigarette. As a member X is supposed to do as the rest, but X is trained in self-discipline by his/her parents. What does X do?

- ⊗ Allow five minutes to the students to plan the role play
- ⊗ Ask them to act their part as would normally happen in the circumstances.

- ⊗ After the role play start a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - ☞ Is this situation possible in real life?
  - ☞ Ask X how did he/she feel?
  - ☞ What is the conflict in this situation?
  - ☞ Was the response of the member to the group appropriate?
  - ☞ Would the other group members listen to them?
  - ☞ What is the right thing to do in this situation? How would you resolve the situation ?
- ⊗ Discuss why people would find it hard to challenge someone in a real life situation.
- ⊗ Summarize by using the guideline for discussion given below.

## **GUIDELINE FOR DISCUSSION**

- ⊗ Assume that people have difficulty saying “No” even when they know it is good for them to say “No”.
- ⊗ Clarify that saying “No” is not easy and that it needs support from others but that is possible. Emphasize that in some situations and with some people, it is particularly difficult, but practice helps.
- ⊗ To say “No”, what is needed is the confidence and the repertoire to say “No”.
- ⊗ Ask the students which techniques seem to work and which do not seem likely to succeed and why.

- ⊗ Elicit other ways to say “No” from the group itself and write them down on a chart paper or blackboard.
- ⊗ Encourage the group members to add to the list, more ways to say “No”.
- ⊗ At the end of the discussion ask the students to copy down the list in their notebooks.

### **PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOURS**

Specific Learning objectives: At the end of this subsection the students should be able to:

Describe verbal and nonverbal aspects of assertive, passive and aggressive behavior.

Material Required: Blackboard and chalk

#### **Method:**

- ⊗ Put the word “Passive”, “Aggressive” and “Assertive” on the blackboard.
- ⊗ Ask students to volunteer for role play.
- ⊗ Divide the students who have volunteered into three groups.
- ⊗ Ask each group to set up a role play to demonstrate either one of the following -passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

- ⊗ After the role plays ask the entire group to describe the verbal and non verbal characteristics of the behaviour. Also they are advised to watch the feelings associated when a person practices the behavior. The outcomes of each behavior are also watched. Note down the responses of the students on the blackboard. Do not prompt the students. Write whatever they say. Use the guideline for discussion below to elaborate on the information provided.

## PASSIVE

### Characteristics

- ⊗ Take no action to assert their rights
- ⊗ Put others first at their expense
- ⊗ Give into what others want
- ⊗ Remain silent when something bothers you
- ⊗ Apologise a lot.

### Feelings.

- ⊗ Helpless
- ⊗ Resentful
- ⊗ Disappointed
- ⊗ Anxious
- ⊗ Humiliated

## Outcomes:

- ⊗ You don't get what you want
- ⊗ You are not taken seriously
- ⊗ People expect you to give in to their demands easily
- ⊗ Anger builds up
- ⊗ Rights are violated
- ⊗ You have a negative self image.

## **AGGRESSIVE**

### Characteristics

- ⊗ Stand up for your own rights with no thought about the other person
- ⊗ Put yourself first at the expense of others.
- ⊗ Overpower others.
- ⊗ Get your own goals, but at the expense of others.

### Feelings.

- ⊗ Angry
- ⊗ Frustrated
- ⊗ Bitter
- ⊗ Guilty or lonely afterwards

## Outcomes:

- ⊗ You dominate
- ⊗ You humiliate
- ⊗ You win at the expense of others
- ⊗ People obey you, but you are not respected for your actions.
- ⊗ You may spark resentment and feelings of revenge in the other person.

## **ASSERTIVE**

### Characteristics

- ⊗ Stand up for your own rights without putting down the rights of others
- ⊗ Respect yourself as well as others.
- ⊗ Listen and talk.
- ⊗ Express positive and negative feelings
- ⊗ Be confident, but not “Pushy”

### Feelings:

- ⊗ You feel better about yourself
- ⊗ Self confident
- ⊗ In control
- ⊗ Respected by others

## Out comes:

- ⊗ You don't hurt others
- ⊗ You gain respect for yourself.
- ⊗ Your rights are respected
- ⊗ You both win
- ⊗ People take you seriously.

This subsection is divided into three activities. The teacher can conduct them separately or conduct two together depending upon the availability of time.

**Specific Learning Objectives:** At the end of this subsection students should be able to:

1. Learn the specific skills in being assertive.
2. Practice these skills through behaviour rehearsal.

## Role Play 1.

Ajith and Anand are good friends. Ajith has lent money to Anand on several occasions. Lately, Ajith has noticed that Anand is becoming slower in paying the money back. Ajith decides to discuss the matter with Anand. After school hours he ask Anand to pay the money back sooner.

Let the students think of their own responses.

- The student who played the role of Ajith is asked to describe how did he feel during the role play? Was it easy to be assertive? Did he think he was being assertive?
- Ask the character who played Anand on how did he feel about Ajith's approach?
- Ask the entire group on what they felt about the role play? Was Ajith assertive enough? What were the good points in Ajith's reply? Could Ajith's approach be improved? If so, how? How would they have reacted?
- Note down the responses of the students on the blackboard. Ask this student to note down these responses.
- Summarize the discussion by using the following guideline for discussion.

## GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION.

Te first time you are assertive, it will b difficult. As you practice, it will be easier and feel more natural. Here are the four steps in making an assertive message.

### **Steps in delivering an assertive message:**

- 1. State how you feel about the behaviour/problem.** Describe the behaviour/problem that violates your rights or disturbs you.

**Step 1.****To do this you may use words like**

Explain your feelings  
and the problem

I feel frustrated when .....

I feel unhappy when .....

I feel ..... When.....

It hurts me when .....

I don't like it when .....

Example: I feel as if I am being used when I lend you money  
and don't get it back right away.

**2. State clearly what you would like to have happen.****Step 2.****To do this you may use words like**

Make your request

I would like it better it.....

I would like you to .....

Could you please....

Please don't ....

I wish you would .....

Example : I would like it better if when you borrow money you  
would return it as soon as possible.

**3. Invite the other person to express his/her feelings or  
thoughts about your request.****Step 3.****Ask how the other person feels  
about your request**

To do this you may  
use words like:

How do you feel about that?

Is that OK with you?

What do you think?

What are your thoughts on that?

Is that alright with you?

**Example:** Is returning money as soon as possible OK with you.

**Answer:** The other person may respond to this by indicating his/her feelings or thoughts about the request. Example in this situation Anand might say. I had a little difficulty this time I will try to return the money sooner next time. Or I am sorry I took you for granted, I will return the money soon.

4. If the other person agrees with your request, saying “thanks” is a good way to end the discussion.

#### Step 4:

#### Accept with thanks

To do this you may

say words like: “Thanks” “Great”, “I appreciate”  
“I am happy that’s OK with you”.

**Example:** Thanks for accepting. Lets, go home I will call you back.

## Role play 2.

Sreedevi is 14 year old. She has some affair with Krishnan. Krishnan has given her a small gift and he wants to take Sreedevi to a movie. She does not want to go out alone with Krishnan, but she fears that he will want her to be with him for the movie because of the gift. She decides that she does not want the gift and does not want to go to the movie and decides to be assertive with Krishnan.

After the role play have a discussion by asking the following questions:

- ◆ Ask the students who played the role of Sreedevi, whether it was easy to deliver the message?
- ◆ Did she face any difficulties in giving the message? If yes, what were the difficulties?
- ◆ Ask the group what were the good points about Sreedevi's message?
- ◆ Was Sreedevi assertive enough? How could Sreedevi improve her message?
- ◆ How would you have responded if you were in Sreedevi's shoes?
- ◆ Note down all the responses on the blackboard. Have a discussion on which steps are practical and would be the most effective, which steps would not be effective and why?
- ◆ Ask the group whether she practiced all the steps? If yes, ask the students to repeat the steps. If no, ask the students what steps Sreedevi missed.

(To deliver her assertive message, Sreedevi should explain her feelings and the problem, make her request, ask Krishnan how he feels about the request, wait for his answer and accept with thanks).

## Scenarios for Role Play

1. You are talking to a number of your friends. Most of them have had sex and are teasing you about the fact that you have not. One of the group hurts you by what they have said. You decide to make an assertive reply.
2. A person of the other sex has asked you to go to a party with him/her. You don't know anyone who is going, which makes you feel a little uncomfortable. You have also heard that this person uses drugs and does not have a very good reputation at school. You decide to be assertive and say no to him/her.
3. You have decided to get a tattoo or your ears pierced. Your friend has told you that you can get it done in a nearby shop. You arrive the place but it does not look very clean. You have heard about HIV/AIDS and unclean needles. You decide to ask the person if the needles are clean and to see the equipment they use. When the person can't show you, you decide to say No assertively.
4. A friend of your family asks if you want a ride home after school. You don't feel very good about this person and you feel uncomfortable about the situation. You decide to be assertive and to refuse the ride.
5. You have gone to a party. When you get there, you realize that there is a lot of drinking going on several people are quite 'high'. Some drugs are also being passed around. The friend you are with is close to you

and you have known him/her for years. He/she comes to you with a glass of alcohol and wants you to have only one glass, if you are his/her friend. You do not want to have the alcohol and decide to be assertive.

6. Your friend wants you to skip school and go to see a movie. He/she tells you that the whole group is going. He/she says, "you are afraid, aren't you." You got caught skipping class last month and don't want to get caught again. You decide to tell him that you don't want to go.
7. Your parents are at work and you invite a friend of the opposite sex over to study. After doing the homework he / she holds your hand. You push him/her away but he/she says "come on, you didn't invite me over just to do the home work". You take a firm stand so it won't happen again.
8. Two of your friends have started smoking and are "showing off" in front of the others. Some of the others in the group want to try smoking. They ask you also to try. You do not want to smoke and decide to say so.

## **RESISTING PERSUASION**

### **Note for the teacher:**

By performing the above role plays students will realize that other people may not always agree when a person is assertive. They may try to interrupt the person who is being assertive, get him/her off the topic or try to persuade him/her to do something he/she does not want to do. It is very important that students learn to deal assertively with people

who try to distract or pressurise them by persuading them to do something they do not think they should.

This subsection has three activities. Depending upon the availability of time, the teacher can take the activities continuously or separately.

### Specific Learning Objectives

At the end of this subsection the students should be able to:

Learn specific skills to respond to persuasion and distraction.

### Method:

- ⊗ The teacher begins a discussion around the following points:
  - ✦ Do people always accept the assertive message?
  - ✦ What are the ways in which people do not accept an assertive message or try to get a person off his/her assertive message?
  - ✦ What can you say when a person tries to get you off the topic?
  - ✦ What can you say when a person tries to persuade you?
  - ✦ (The students should try to remember the role plays performed on assertive behavior while answering the questions).
- ⊗ Make three columns on the blackboard: ways people get you off the message, what to say when people get you off, what to say when people try to persuade.

- ⊗ Note down the answers of the students under these columns.
- ⊗ Some of the answers that may come across are:
- ⊗ Ways people get you off your message or do not accept it
  - 1. Put you down
  - 2. Argue
  - 3. Threaten
  - 4. No problem
  - 5. Reasons
  - 6. Getting you off the topic

## **GUIDELINE FOR DISCUSSION**

Learning how to respond to a person who tries to distract you or persuade you to do something that you do not want to do, is an important skill. What can you say when people try to get you off the topic or persuade you

**Step 1** in cases when a person is trying to get you off your assertive message, get back on the topic.

### **Some ways to do that:**

Please let me finish what I was saying

Please don't stop me until I am finished

That is fine. But please listen to what I have to say

I know you think.....but let me finish what I was saying.

**Step 2** the other person will then try to persuade you to his/her way of thinking. If the other person tries to persuade you to do something you do not want to do:

Refuse, say no clearly, and if necessary leave

No, No I really mean No

No, Thank you

No, No, I am leaving

Delay, Put off a decision until you can think about it

I am not ready yet.

Maybe we can talk later.

I would like to talk to a friend first

Bargain, try to make a decision that both people like.

Let us do.... Instead.....

I won't do that, but may be we could do.....

What would make us both happy?

Avoid a confrontation: Be careful of your verbal and non-verbal gestures. Do not shout, stamp your feet or make angry gestures. At the same time do not be shy, too soft or inaudible. State your opinion in a firm clear voice with head upright and eye contact.

## STEPS IN DELIVERING AN ASSERTIVE MESSAGE AND RESPONDING TO PERSUASION

(Ask the students to note this down for their reference)

Steps	Words you might say
Explain your feelings and the problem	I feel frustrated when .....
Distracting statement	Other person tries to get you off topic
Get back on topic	Please let me finish what I was saying ....
Make your request	I would like you to listen to what I have to say .. I would like it better if ..... I would like you to ..... Could you please.... Please don't .... I wish you would ....
Ask how the other person feels about your request	How do you feel about that ? Is that OK with you What do you think ? What are your thoughts on that? Is that all right with you?
Persuasive statement	Other person tries to get you to change your mind
Refuse	No, No I really mean No. No, no and I am leaving No, I am not going to do that
Delay	I love you, but I am not ready now - may be later May be we can talk later
Bargain	Let us do..... instead How about we try..... What would make us both happy?

## Role Play 3

***Resisting persuasion Material required: Blackboard and chalk to note down the responses of the students***

### Method:

- Ask students to volunteer for a role play
- Explain the scenario for the role play to them.

Role Play: You are alone with your boy friend in a party. Your boyfriend is usually very gentle, but today he becomes quite aggressive with his demands for sex. He interrupts you and tries to take you into having sex.

- Ask the students to show how will they respond in different situations when the boyfriend:
  - 💧 Puts you down by saying, “you are just afraid”.
  - 💧 Argues by saying, “Why not, everyone is doing it”.
  - 💧 Threatens by saying, “Do it or goodbye. I can hurt you if you don’t”.
  - 💧 Reasons by saying, “you owe me. You are old enough now”.
  - 💧 Gets off the topic by saying, “you have nice eyes. I like you when you are angry”.

- ◆ Says, “There is no problem. Nothing will go wrong. Do not worry”.
- After each situation stop the role play and ask the entire class on what do they think of the role play? Was the answer assertive enough? How would they respond in similar situations?
  - ◆ Whether such instances happen in the real life situations?
  - ◆ Is having sex the only way to prove love?
- Ask the girls whether they would be able to use the skills acquired in the session and respond assertively to boys if similar situations occur in real life? If not, what are the problems they anticipate in responding assertively? Encourage the whole group to come up with practical solutions to their problems.

## PART V

# Counselling Skills

### What is Counselling?

*Counselling is a therapeutic communication in which the counsellor facilitate the client to find out his / her own problems and generate possible solutions and select the one which is most appropriate for him/her. In this process communication skills, problem solving skills and decision making skills are often enhanced.*

### Commonalities in Psychotherapeutic Techniques

- ❖ Expectation of help
- ❖ Participation in therapeutic relationship
- ❖ Getting external perspective
- ❖ Encouragement of corrective experience
- ❖ Opportunity to test reality

## Stress - Definition

A syndrome that results from having to adapt to demands from the external and internal environments.

### Stress

- ❖ *People have persistent behaviors*
- ❖ *Under stress people cope differently*
- ❖ *Overwhelmed people regress functionally*
- ❖ *Poor adaptation causes ill health*

### Stress and Social Support

- ❖ *As stress levels increase, sense of control decreases*
- ❖ *As social support increases, subjective stress decreases*

### Social Support Provides Positive Information

- ❖ *About the person*
- ❖ *About the relationship*
- ❖ *About handling the problem*

### Two Basic Human Needs

- ❖ *To feel competent*
- ❖ *To feel connected*

## Aims

- ❖ *Re-establishing pre-morbid level of functioning*
- ❖ *Expanding behaviour repertoire*
- ❖ *Preventing dire consequences*
- ❖ *Enhancing patient's self-esteem*

## Objectives

- ❖ Guiding and helping people to make rational decisions
- ❖ To organize plans for constructive pursuits
- ❖ To seek out the best community resources to satisfy immediate and future needs
- ❖ Correction of situational difficulties
- ❖ Rectification of deviant behaviours
- ❖ Expansion of personal skills & abilities
- ❖ Reshaping attitudes
- ❖ Reorganizing feelings
- ❖ Instilling desirable value system
- ❖ Over coming reluctances and inhibition towards action

### Counselling include:

- ❖ *Advise giving, guidance, emotional support, reassurance*
- ❖ *Environmental manipulation*
- ❖ *Interviewing significant people of the client and counseling them if necessary*
- ❖ *Modification of interpersonal relationships*
- ❖ *Suggestion*
- ❖ *Emotional catharsis*
- ❖ *Encouraging better expression of feelings*
- ❖ *Improvement of learning ability and study habits*
- ❖ *Teaching coping skills*
- ❖ *Encouraging client's expression of feelings*
- ❖ *Developing prosocial behaviour*
- ❖ *Tension control, anxiety management, relaxation*
- ❖ *Enhancing client's self understanding*

### Psychotherapy Means Editing The Story

- ❖ *The story must be heard*
- ❖ *The story must be reflected back with empathy*
- ❖ *Limits must be challenged*

## Challenging Absolutes

- ❖ *Always*
- ❖ *Never*
- ❖ *Everyone*
- ❖ *No one*

## Challenging Imposed Limits

- ❖ *Can't*
- ❖ *Must*
- ❖ *Should*
- ❖ *It's impossible*

## The Amazing Power of the Word "Yet"

- ❖ *YET implies it is possible*
- ❖ *YET implies impending change*
- ❖ *YET empowers people to contemplate changes*

## Strategies For Helping

- ❖ *Focusing on options*
- ❖ *Looking at consequences*
- ❖ *Applying tincture of time*
- ❖ *Choosing not to choose*

## Four Options in a Bad Situation

- ❖ *Leave it*
- ❖ *Change it*
- ❖ *Accept it*
- ❖ *Reframe it*

## Focusing the person in the Present

- ❖ *The past is gone*
- ❖ *The future is not here yet*
- ❖ *We can only act/feel in the here and now*

### "B A T H E" - Appropriate Questions

- ❖ *Background*      *"What is going on in your life?"*
- ❖ *Affect/feeling*      *"How are you feeling about that?"*
- ❖ *Trouble*      *"What troubles you the most?"*
- ❖ *Handling*      *"How are you handling that?"*
- ❖ *Empathy*      *"That must be very difficult"*

*"The sorrow which has no vent in tears may make other organs weep."*

Henry Maudsley M.D

*"The art of medicine is to keep the patient amused until nature effects a cure"*

Voltaire

*"A problem shared is problem half solved"*

Anonymous

## "G A T H E R"

### Greet Clients

- ❖ Give clients your full attention as soon as you meet them
- ❖ Be polite, friendly, and respectful : greet clients, introduce yourself, and offer them seats
- ❖ Ask how you can help
- ❖ Tell clients that you will not tell others what they say
- ❖ Explain what will happen during the visits.
- ❖ Conduct counseling where no one else can hear.

### Ask Clients About Themselves

- ❖ Ask clients about their reasons for coming
- ❖ Help clients decide what problems they face
- ❖ Ask what they know about
- ❖ Help clients express their feelings, needs, wants, and any doubts, concerns or questions.
- ❖ Ask clients about the matter that concerns them
- ❖ Keep questions open, simple and brief. Look at your client as you speak
- ❖ Ask clients what they want to do
- ❖ Listen actively *to what the client says*. Follow where *the* client leads the discussion
- ❖ Show your interest and understanding at all times. Express empathy. Avoid judgments and opinions
- ❖ Ask for any information needed

## Tell Clients About their Choices

- ❖ To make informed choices and good decisions, clients need clear, accurate, specific information about the range of their choices
- ❖ Help clients understand their possible choices
- ❖ Information should be tailored – to the client's decision
- ❖ Information should be personalized – in terms of the client's own life.

## Help Clients Choose

- ❖ Tell clients that the choice is theirs. Avoid making the clients' decisions for them.
- ❖ To help clients choose, ask them to think about their plans and family situations
- ❖ Ask if the client wants anything made clearer. Re-word and repeat information as needed
- ❖ Check whether the client has made a clear decision. Specifically ask, "What have you decided to do?" wait for the client to answer

## Explain What to Do

- ❖ Ask the client to repeat instructions. Make sure the client remembers and understands
- ❖ If possible, give the client printed material to take home
- ❖ Ask if the client has any questions or anything to discuss. Treat all concerns seriously

## Return For Follow-up

- ❖ Ask if the client is comfortable and feeling better. Has there been problems?
- ❖ Help the client handle any problems
- ❖ Explain When to come back for routine follow-up.
- ❖ Tell clients to come back whenever they wish.

## Difficult Persons

- ❖ *The hypochondriac*
- ❖ *The chronic complainer*
- ❖ *The substance abuser*
- ❖ *The depressed person*
- ❖ *The grieving person*

## The Suicidal Person

- ❖ *Desires to turn off the pain*
- ❖ *Death excludes other options*
- ❖ *Connect and get commitment*
- ❖ *Be available and document*

## Rules for Therapist's Survival

- ❖ Do not take responsibility for things you cannot control
- ❖ Take care of yourself, otherwise you can't take care of anybody else
- ❖ Trouble is easier to prevent than to solve
- ❖ Ask for support if you need it
- ❖ Give permission to people to feel what they feel
- ❖ If the outcome is not satisfactory refer the person to a mental health expert

## Good Outcome

- ❖ Establishing a good rapport
- ❖ Warm, accepting and keeping an uncritical attitude
- ❖ Unhurried listening to what the patient says, and also what he does not say
- ❖ Genuine interest in the client
- ❖ Positive regards for the client
- ❖ Empathy

- ❖ Trust, confidentiality and dependability
- ❖ Hope and motivation - for the client and for the Therapist as well
- ❖ Ability to translate psychological concepts to the client's level of understanding
- ❖ Personality of the Therapist
- ❖ Counsellor - Counselee relationship

## You can help a Suicidal Teenager

- Step 1.** Deal with your own feelings and attitude towards suicide first. Providing a supportive and understanding atmosphere will help a suicidal person.
- Step 2.** Listen. Don't lecture. What the young person really needs in a crisis is someone who will listen to what is being said. Try to understand from the teenager's viewpoint.
- Step 3.** Accept what is said and treat it seriously. Do not judge them or offer platitudes. Do not minimize or discount the young person's feelings of despair. Remember that most young people who contemplate or attempt suicide are not intent on dying. Rather, at the moment, the pain of living is more unbearable than the fear of dying.
- Step 4.** Ask directly if the individual is thinking of suicide. If the teenager has not been thinking of suicide, she / he will tell you. If she/he has been thinking of it, it gives you the opportunity to bring it out in the open. Isolation and the feeling that there is no one to talk to, compounds suicidal ideation. You will not cause someone to commit suicide by asking them if they are suicidal.

- Step 5.** Talk openly and freely and try to determine whether the person has a plan for suicide. The more detailed the plan, the greater the risk.
- Step 6.** Focus on the positives. Point out that depression causes people to see only the negatives in their lives and to be temporarily unable to see the positives. Point out recent successes or some positive personal qualities.
- Step 7.** Discuss the alternatives. Look at what the young person hopes to accomplish by suicide and generate alternative ways of reaching the same goals. Help determine what need to be done or changed. Recall previous coping strategies.
- Step 8.** Do not leave the adolescent alone. Do not be misled by the adolescent's comments that she/he is past the emotional crisis. Do not be sworn to secrecy.
- Step 9.** Call upon whoever is needed, depending upon the severity of the situation. Do not try to handle everything alone. Convey an attitude of firmness and composure so that the person will feel that something appropriate and realistic is being done.
- Step 10.** Keep an updated list of resources of counseling services, and the twenty-four hour telephone counseling centers.

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# **LIFE SKILLS FOR Psychosocial Competence**

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